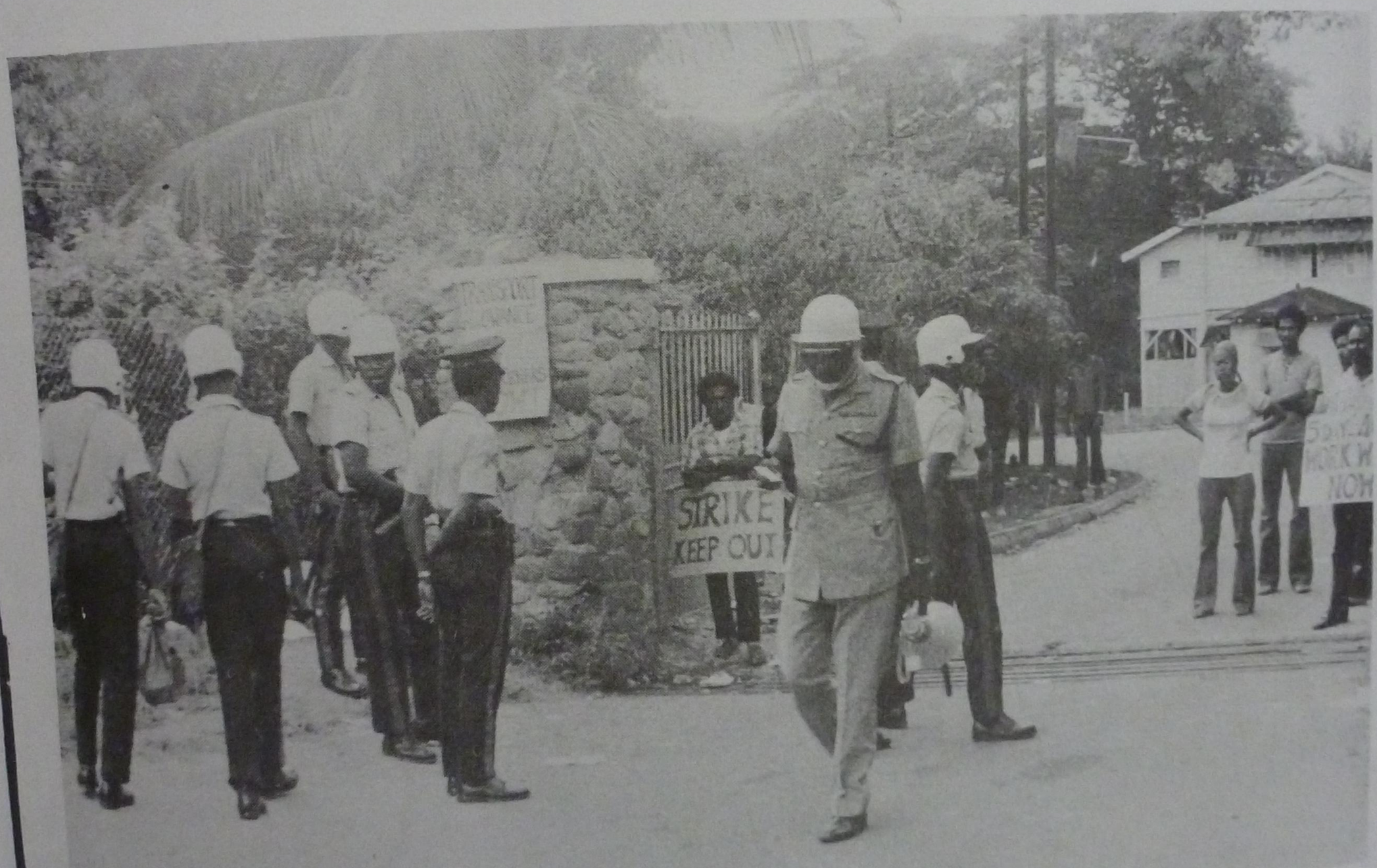
THE UNIVERSITY

WORKERS STRIKE



lessons for our struggle

THE UNIVERSITY WORKERS' STRIKE:

LESSONS FOR OUR STRUGGLE

By 'Socialist'

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PAMPHLET C

LESSONS FOR OUR STRUGGLE

Almost a year has passed since the strike of university workers ctober 1972. 500 workers in a single work place successfully de- ed a wealthy and powerful management supported by the ruling cap- ist class, the police, the soldiers, the pro-imperialist newspap- and the Manley government itself.

Over a period of 3 long weeks, the workers -drawing on the nquerable power of their collective strength; united and disci- ed in their own democratic workers union - the University and ied Workers Union under conditions of great economic hardship; eats of violence and intimidation; with the utmost self-sacrifice, ermination and militancy, attacked, retreated, regrouped their cos and stood firm until the capitalist oppressors were over- e

Our country was amazed at this sight; the victory of a hand- l of workers over the wealthy capitalist supported by the govern- nt. The whole country - big capitalists, middle class, workers lke have been puzzled by this achievement. "How", they ask,"could group of illiterate black labourers defeat the 'bri'liant' whiteman rshall and the 'mighty' Joshua himself?" Many people have asked emselves what was the significance of this event in the political evelopment of our country. Some people do not understand to this day w it was possible for this victory to occur at all - so accustomed ave we grown to capitalist slavery.

The poor and oppressed people of all classes supported and ere strengthened by this victory. The middle class was confused. he big capitalists were shocked and outraged. But very few people

have studied or understood the significance of what took place dur- ing the October strike for the political development of Jamaica.

What was the significance if the October strike on the univer- sity campus? In the political development of every country there are short periods of intense, revolutionary struggle followed by long periods of relative calm.

In the periods of calm, the oppressed people rest, build up their political strength, reorganize and unify their ranks for the coming storm. In the periods of storm, the people fight the actual battles themselves. Both periods are necessary for each other as the night is for the day. It is like the calm before the storm: if you do not have one , you cannot have the other.

Many hasty and anxious people do not understand this cardinal feature of struggle. In these long periods of calm - these long nights of the peoples' struggle - it often appears to these impat- ient people that the masses have given up, stopped fighting totally and lost all hope of winning freedom.

In our peoples' history, we have been through many such long periods of night, followed by the short bright days of struggle. In 1832 after some 30 odd years, the bright day of Sam Sharpe's slave revolt dawned. After it was crushed by the slavemasters, it was followed by the long night of 1833 - 1865 until the great battle of Bogle and Gordon. This too was crushed and from 1865 - 1890 was an- other long period of calm. This was broken by the almost uninterrup ted struggles for land and liberty of Garvey and the labour movemen up until 1938 - 41. And now, we are passing out of the long night of calm lasting from the 1940's up to the present time.

For the last 30 years, the leadership of the peoples' strugg- le for a better life has been 'captured' by, the capitalist class. For 30 years the big capitalists have led our country - telling us what to believe and what not to believe, what to do and what not to do, and how and when to do it. For all these years, they have shown all of us (both workers and the middle class) right from wrong taking over every area of our economic, political, social, cultural and even religious life. They are the kings of Jamaica, the lords and masters and we are the servants and slaves.

Over these 30 years, how fat and prosperous these big capitalists have become! How well dressed their wives are! To what excellent schools their children go! And how beautiful and luxurious are their palaces and cars!

While the masses of people have to starve and suffer every kind of hardship, poverty, illiteracy, disease, crime and put up with hatred for black people.

Because of these misleaders and 'false prophets', time and again in the history of the struggle for rights and justice, it has been truly said that no hands can free the people but their own. Not Matalon, not Joshua, but the hardworking hands of the people themselves.

For over 30 years, the working people of Jamaica went through this long period of calm, during which the workers obeyed the commands of the slave-drivers, suffered defeat after defeat and forgot what it was to lead their own struggles and taste the sweetness of victory.

But in 1972 for the first time since the glorious days of 1938 the real working class spirit, that invincible democratic, fighting spirit, the spirit which every oppressor throughout the entire world fears, the spirit which fought the British and won us our independence flared up again like a bright flame. The great spirit of the workers was not dead, it had only been sleeping all these years.

In October 1972, the workers at UWI woke up and came to know themselves. They threw off the leadership of big capitalist labour unions and on their own opened a new chapter in our history.

After 30 years of 'serving' the capitalists, the workers once again had taken up the leadership of the struggle of all our people for an end to economic exploitation and for a better life. This was the great lesson to learn from the October strike.

THE AWAKENING

A new spirit has been re-born among our working people. The workers no longer sit down and take insults, starvation wages and economic exploitation as the 'will of God. The workers no longer allow the capitalists and the white man to kick them around. Workers no

longer see themselves as inferior nor accept illiteracy, poor housing and poor transportation as their lot in life. No longer do they tremble at the sight of the boss and bow down before management; no longer can the big capitalists do as they like with our people and treat us like children. And no longer shall the workers take a back seat in their very own workers' organisations - the trade unions.

The workers want a bigger say, they want to run their own unions, to take themselves out from under the wing of the so-called 'union leaders' who have been bought out by management. They want to make the pro-capitalist labour unions - the NWU and BITU - more democratic and to put them under the control of the ordinary worker. They want to form their own organisations where they think it necessary, and they want the law, the army and the police to protect workers' organisations and to require that capitalists respect and recognise their authority. The workers are not bending over backwards or turning the other cheek any more and this frightens the big capitalists and confuses the middle class.

The big capitalists - the rich Jews, rich whitemen and brownmen, the rich Syrians and the rich Chinese - all of them tied up with imperialism - have every reason to be frightened. For many years they have stepped on the necks of the workers and trampled upon the people of Jamaica. Everyday the masses see and feel their hatred for black people and their hatred for the working class.

Of late, these big capitalists - the big merchants, factory owners, supermarket owners, landlords, real estate and housing speculators - have pushed up the cost of living sky high, beyond the reach even of many middle class people, and, much more so, beyond the workers' reach. In the midst of these crimes against the people, this handful of people - the big capitalists - get richer and richer and roll by in their air-conditioned cars and relax in their swimming pools and luxury apartments. If you were them wouldn't you tremble at this new spirit among the workers which threatens their ill-gotten gains? Yes, the big capitalists are frightened and do everything in their power to crush this new spirit by force as well as to bribe and buy out the workers' leaders.

What about the middle class? How do they see what is going on? The middle class is 'in the middle' - between the big capitalists and the workers. Many of the middle class - lawyers, doctors, senior civil

servants, big contractors, prosperous shopkeepers, medium sized farmers - have money and are quite well off. Others - the majority - secretaries, clerks, teachers, students, smaller farmers, assistants of all kinds, technicians, some shopkeepers - have to fight a daily struggle to bear the cost of living which is killing them. This section of the middle class barely manages to keep their heads above water.

The middle class is middling in everything - in the money they have, in education and in housing. In politics too the middle class stands in the middle between the capitalists and workers. One section of them has always sided with the big capitalists against the workers. This section worships the ground the capitalists walk on, looks up to them, dreams of becoming capitalist sharks themselves and despises the black working masses.

They see it as their duty to serve their capitalist masters and to do everything they say. And since this section is closer to the workers than the high and mighty capitalists (who do not care to mix-up too much with black people) they serve the slavedrivers by posing as the friend of the working class. They take over the workers trade unions and act as the agents of capitalism in the labour movement.

Here they do their evil best to cook up deals with management and to sell out the workers day after day. While the workers are crushed by the management, they feather their own nests and progress at the workers' expense. Then they turn around and sing the praises of capitalism and make up a whole heap of lies about countries like Cuba and the Soviet Union which have got rid of their capitalist oppressors. They make up stories about starvation and slavery in countries which have got rid of their oppressors to frighten people away from the truth, so that they can continue to live their easy life - at the workers' expense.

They throw cold water on the workers' spirit and attempt to boss them about in their own workers' organisation. They run the [illegible] cards, credit unions, church committees, women's organisations and the so-called Workers Bank. They try to control (and for the past 30 years have succeeded in controlling) all organisations which affect the life of the ordinary Jamaican and to tie these organisations to the tail of the big capitalists. That is why this section of the

middle class is called the agents of capitalism in the labour movement.

But the other section of the middle class - the majority - does not follow this road of betrayal. They can hardly make two ends meet. They have been and continue to be kicked around by the big capitalists and hit out against them for this reason.

At the same time they often are small capitalists themselves or have had the ideas of capitalism drummed into their heads by the big capitalist newspapers. Their problem is that in front of them they see their hated enemy - the big capitalists; but over their shoulders they see the workers whom they often exploit, try to rule and push around and of whom they are afraid. So this section of the middle class is confused. It does not know what to do. Sometimes it tries to play both sides.

They have supported the two capitalist political parties (JLP and PNP) in the past. In the last election a lot of them jumped over to the PNP side, because they were sick and tired of the mess which the JLP made of the country. The PNP had not been the government for 10 years and these people thought - "Why not give them a chance? Manley can't be worse than Shearer?"

The middle class tends to be unstable and is easily influenced to change its mind by words. It allowed 'Joshua's' sweet mouth to turn its head. The middle class helped to put the PNP back in power.

Now, a year and a half later, the fine promises of Joshua are as 'sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal'. These promises are loosing their glitter, are turning out not to be 'golden' promises at all but to be made of brass 'wash over' gold. These promises are like the stale bread which a big baking company is selling as 'bun' at the 'better' sky high, Manley price. Now that elections are past and gone, these promises have been pushed aside by Matalon and Manley and have been turned into a mess of pottage. These promises have been drowned by the economic crisis hitting the capitalist world and especially the American capitalists who are our lords and masters. Manley, Matalon and the American Ambassador have sold us out to the American and European capitalists and these capitalists have sent up their prices, profiteering and speculating at our expense, killing

us with increases in the cost of living. Once again the middle class has been duped and fooled up: once again the progressive section of the middle class is disa pointed and confused - looking for a way out. It does not know where to turn to now.

The whole country, except the big capitalists has been fooled up, The whole country, except the big capitalists, does not know where to turn now. The cost of living is killing everybody, except the big capitalists. Everybody, except them, is feeling the pressure, is worried and wondering what to do.

The whole country is now seeing that the two capitalist political parties - the JLP and the PNP - are one and the same thing. But the problem is: what to do about it?

The university workers' strike gives us an example of what more and more of our people have to do. That is why all progressive minded people both workers and middle class have to study carefully the October strike on the university campus.

UNITE AND FIGHT OUR COMMON FOE

IN THEIR HARD AND BITTER STRUGGLE AGAINST THE BIG CAPITALISTS, THE UAWU WORKERS HAVE POINTED THE WAY FOR YOU AND YOUR FELLOW WORKING PEOPLE TO TAKE IN YOUR STRUGGLES AGAINST YOUR OPPRESSORS. IT HAS POINTED THE WAY FOR WORKERS FIGHTING EXPLOITATION, BAD WORKING CONDITIONS AND CORRUPT UNION LEADERSHIP: IT HAS POINTED THE WAY FOR MIDDLE CLASS PEOPLE ROBBED BY THE SUPERMARKET SHARKS; IT HAS POINTED THE WAY FOR THE SMALL AND MEDIUM FARMERS FOOLED UP BY THE BIG FARMERS ON THE BANANA BOARD, THE SUGAR MANUFACTURING CORPORATION AND THE CHICKEN BROILER CAPITALISTS. IT HAS SHOWN ALL OF US HOW TO FIGHT OUR COMMON ENEMY - THE BIG CAPITALISTS.

The UAWU workers have taught us all a lesson in how to fight the slavemaster. How to analyse and to see the genera' political situation, how to organise for battle, how to develop sound strategy and tactics; how to publicise the struggle and to win allies to our cause; how and when to attack and to retreat; and how to correct mistakes. All progressive minded people must study these principles well and learn to apply them against our common foe. Only in this

can we rid our country of these capitalist parasites who are sucking us dry. Only then can we begin to build a better life for us all.

II

THE WORKERS' UNION AND THE DECISION TO STRIKE

To fully understand the strike of October, we have to examine the circumstances that lead up to the strike: the ousting of the BITU, the formation of the UAWU and the negotiations with the management.

The UAWU was formed in February 1971. But just to look at February only would be to look on the date when the 'baby' was born and not to realize that the 'baby mother' was in a state of pregnancy from long before.

In fact the 'pregnancy' must be seen as going back to as far as 1948 with establishment of the university. This state of pregnancy was invisible up to 1966 when the workers of the university called for union representation for the first time.

In 1966 the workers of the university called upon the NWU to represent them. But with a general election due the following year, the NWU leadership refused to represent the workers. The NWU leadership was confident of a PNP victory at the polls and had no plans to embarass the would-be new PNP government by taking up the university workers' cause. They refused to represent the workers on whose behalf they would have had to seek wage increases from their same PNP government. As a result of this refusal by the NWU the workers called in the BITU.

Since they did not expect to win the elections, the BITU leadership accepted the workers' invitation to represent them. But without a genuine workers' union controlled by themselves, the workers

of the university were misled and misrepresented by the BITU leadership for over six years. Unknown to the BITU leadership each time they misrepresented the workers, they were digging their own grave on the campus deeper and deeper.

The final act of the BITU leadership came in 1971. Early in 1971, the BITU leader called out the workers on strike for improved wages and better working conditions. The BITU leadership ordered the workers to march on a luncheon in the university Assembly Hall where the chief guests were the English Princess Alice - the former Chancellor of the UWI - and the JLP leader Seaga.

When it came time to start the demonstration and to march into the Assembly Hall luncheon, the BITU leadership became coward. They slipped away and left the workers alone to face the wrath of the JLP government and the UWI management.

Afterwards, to make matters even worse, the BITU leadership issued a public 'apology' to the English Princess and the UWI management in the name of the workers. Then they sent the workers back to work with nothing. They thus crowned their disgrace of the workers with a sell-out.

These were bitter experiences. But they are not very different from what workers all over Jamaica have to put up with year after year. What was different this time, was that the union delegates did not take this sell-out lying down. Led by Mr. Douglas Jones (founder/president of the UAWU) the BITU delegates at the UWI resigned in disgust. They began to organise their fellow campus workers on their own.

Thus began the struggle to build a real working class trade union - worker financed, worker controlled and run along democratic lines for the workers'own good and the benefit of all.

The BITU leadership and the capitalist class was not going to sit down and watch thousands of dollars in dues slip out of their hands just so. They were not going to stand idly by and allow the UAWU to be a beacon light for the rest of the workers in Jamaica to follow. They tried all possible means to destroy the workers and their representatives.

But the workers stood firm on all occasions that they were attacked, even when this meant facing hired gunmen. One of the most wicked acts of these hired gunmen took place at the Ministry of Labour on the 5th May, 1972, when the president and delegates of the union were beaten at gunpoint.

Such violence and intimidation has long been used by the capitalists and their agents to cow the workers. But the UWI workers were not cowed. The attack taught them that the road ahead would be rough and that many traps would be set for them along the way. Only those with a strong heart and those who were ready to make sacrifices could join the fight.

The violence and intimidation was only one of the means which the capitalist class and their agents tried to block the development of the workers' own organisation. Later attempts, just as wicked, were made to destroy the union.

On the 1st of June 1972, the capitalist management of the UWI in collaboration with the rest of the capitalist class in the country, and including elements in the BITU leadership, ganged up against the university workers. Their plot was to destroy the young workers' union.

The 1st of June was the date set for the representational poll between the BITU and the UAWU. The poll was to take place on the UWI compound. On the morning of the poll, the entire campus was taken over by hired gunmen trying to prevent the workers from voting in the union of their choice - the UAWU.

Though requests were made by both the UAWU and the students union, the university management refused to call the police onto the campus when these hired gunmen began brandishing their guns. They would stop at nothing to crush the UAWU.

The UAWU had no guns. But led by their own fellow workers and supported by progressive people on and off the campus, the workers beat these ruthless, desperate forces of reaction.

On top of all this, the management supplied a bogus poll list for the voting. The poll list which they supplied was packed with

'workers' who the management now insists are non-unionisable. At the same time many workers who were thought to be UAWU supporters were "forgotten' off the list.

The workers were determined, united and had prepared well. The workers gave their support to their own workers' organisation and drove out the BITU. All the plots of the capitalists and their agents to abort the birth of the UAWU failed miserably.

NEGOTIATIONS

After gaining bargaining and representational rights, the UAWU discussed fully with the workers their grievances. Out of these discussions a thirty-two point claim was drawn up by the workers themselves and served on the management.

This was the first time in the 24 year history of the university that workers had served a claim on the management. Like so many other places, the workers had only heard talk about the existence of a collective agreement. But nobody had even been allowed to see it, much less to put forward their own views about what should be in it. Now, with their own workers' union, the workers themselves had decided what should go into their claim.

As a result of their high ahd mighty attitude, the management believed that the workers were not capable of negotiating an agreement with them. Only the President of the union had training in trade union affairs so they figured that if he could be bought out the UAWU would be a walk over for them.

But these schemes did not reckon with the strong will of the President and his integrity. All attempts to bribe him were rebuffed and exposed. At last it dawned on the management, that there was no way in which they could buy out or intimidate the union leadership. So they called in the union to begin negotiations.

Between the period of June 5th and September 1972, the union and the management met nineteen times around the negotiating table. Agreement was reached on 25 points in the claim including wage increases, job re-classification, work schedules, protective clothing and uniforms, clean up and tool check time and the check off system for

the payment of union dues.

After agreement was reached on the 25 points of the union's claim, the Jamaica Employers Federation, the watchdog of the big capitalists began to attack the university for arriving at such bona-ficial an agreement with the workers. At this point the UWI management began playing smart. They began to refuse to negotiate with the union.

After repeated attempts to get the management to negotiate on the outstanding points failed, the issue of a strike came up. This was towards the end of September 1972. The situation was considered by the Delegates Council of the UAWU and the question of a strike was put before one of the regular mass meetings for the decision of the whole body of workers. The workers gave their leaders the mandate: if the university management would not negotiate, then strike!

WHO WERE THE WORKERS WHO DECIDED TO STRIKE

The workers who decided to strike were the same workers who were unrepresented by any union between 1948 and 1966, the same people who were misrepresented by the BITU between 1966 and 1971.

These workers were in a position similar to that faced by a majority of workers in Jamaica today. The university workers tried to make their union more democratic just as many other workers in Jamaica are trying and must continue to do.

When the university workers failed in this attempt, only then did these same workers oust the BITU and replaced them with their own union - the UAWU. But to say this alone of these workers would not be telling their true and full story.

In order for us to have a full understanding of these people who built their own independent union, we have to look at the circumstances that lead up to the strike.

To do this properly, it is necessary to examine the class background of the working people at UWI. By so doing we will understand what were the workers' strength and what were their weaknesses and why the class struggle against the management developed the way it did. For example, why when the UAWU acted to protect the workers' interests by shortening the working day, the management and the

government attacked the workers by lengthening it.

When we examine the life which the workers lead both at work and at home, we see certain things.

First of all many of the workers have a rural 'country' background, have family in the country, sending money to relatives in their district and spend their vacation leave in the country. It is in country parishes such as Trelawny, Westmoreland, St. Elizabeth, Portland and St. Thomas that many workers were born, grew up and went to school.

Like many poor people in Kingston, the campus workers know the hardship of country life - the rockstone land, the bad roads, the long journeys to draw water. These people know the class oppression meted out to them and their families by the big landowners and rich farmers.

It is this oppression which drove the workers, as youth, away from the land to come to 'town' to get a job, improve themselves and escape the harsh conditions created by 'backra massa', the big land baron in the countryside.

In the country the workers grew up mostly among small farmers i.e. those owning at the most 5 acres of land - but usually far less - usually only a few chains of hillside rockstone family land.

For generations this class of small farmers has been ground down into the dirt, into the direst poverty and illiteracy by the wicked landowners. Many of them have long ago lost all land, live on 'rent land' or 'beg-land', work for the landowners and not for themselves and cannot even find a pot to piss in, as the saying goes.

Though this is so, these same small farmers find it very hard to come together in their own independent organisation to fight the land barons and to better their lot in life. Instead each holds on to his little chain or two of land which the big landowners have allowed him to keep as a sop.

The small farmers fight and quarrel amongst themselves, work obeah, begrudge and keep up 'bad mind' against each other, over their

insignificant plots of land (over dead lef' and over land lines). They are unable to unite against this common foe because their petty plots of land get in the way of unity.

Individualism and capitalism bred minutely, hourly and daily by petty capitalism, by small farming and higglering is a way of life for small farmers. Their motto is not the fearless, universal call 'Workers of the world unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains! You have the whole world to gain! It is the low-down, cunning saying 'Parson christen him pickney fus!

Even when driven by their common oppression to overcome their individualism and to form an organisation, it is not long before the old grudgeful habits come to the fore again and cause their organisation to split up into little pieces or to be taken over by the big sugar and banana barons. It is this bad mind which occurs amongst small capitalists in the town as well as in the country which is called the petty capitalist or 'petty bourgeois' mentality. ('Bourgeois' is another word for capitalist - one who owns means of distribution and production - land, factories, banks, supermarkets, and lives off hired labour. A petty bourgeois is a small capitalist)

The youth run away from the wretched countryside and come to town. Some of the working people bring with them this petty-bourgeois mentality which keeps back the unity of the oppressed people and is totally alien to the working class.

The working class, which has no land to quarrel over, is united by its common labour together. It is made up of people inclined to be sociable, straight forward and plain. Yet many workers in Jamaica find themselves having to fight in their hearts against petty-bourgeois attitudes which refuse to make sacrifices for the good of all.

This petty-bourgeois attitude is an extremely widespread disease in our country because of the numberless petty-capitalists all over surrounding the real working class. They are the smallest shopkeepers, higglers, pant-length and kisko-pop vendors, shoemakers, tailors, dressmakers, hairdressers and many, many others. In the country they are the small farmers. All the while, the workers have to be on their guard against adopting the bad attitudes of this class of people which places self first above all.

Some workers on the campus were infected by these petty-capitalist germs. They would be individualistic sometimes, but at other times would unite and cooperate with other workers when it suited them. Naturally such people cannot be depended on; their actions weakened all workers in their struggle against a tricky and wicked management.

The unity of the workers was further weakened by the heavy burdens which they are forced to bear by the capitalists. The dry-weather housing, overcrowded and expensive; the expensive food and clothing; the very bad living conditions, and very low hand-to-mouth pay - all these things crush the will of the workers, discourage them and drive some of them to excessive drinking.

These conditions exist not only on the university campus, but in every part of Jamaica and the world where workers are slaves of the capitalist class and are forced to work for them. The pay received is never really enough to feed the workers' families for a week. By the beginning of the next week, the workers are already broke, so they must go back to work for the capitlaist class in the coming week if they are not to starve.

The capitalist class arranges the working hours to suit itself to make higher profits from exploiting the workers labour-power so they can live an easy life. They 'stagger' working hours, demanding that workers must be on the job by 7:30 am and leave at 4:30 -5:00 pm. And so it continues week-in, week-out, year-in, year-out, for generations.

As a result, the workers become exhausted and die at an early age. In everyday life they are downhearted, having little or no time to develop themselves politically or culturally.

Furthermore, the harsh living and working conditions drives the worker to take up petty hustling, keeping animals, selling food brought in from the country etc. The men are always keeping dances, the women crochet, plait bags and sew baby clothes - all in a desperate effort to make two ends meet.

These activities which are forced upon the workers by low wages and bad conditions sometimes have a bad effect on working class unity.

They encourage some people to dream of becoming petty capitalists, of 'climbing' within the capitalist way of life. These activities strengthen individualism and undermines working class solidarity because some workers begin to look down on their brothers and sisters and "'ceitful" them as people 'without ambition' etc. etc. This petty-shopkeeper, 'Chinaman' outlook, by weakening the unity of the workers also helps to make the capitalists stronger in the class struggle against the workers.

On top of all these problems which face the workers all over Jamaica, campus workers suffered from special conditions peculiar to the university.

The university campus is what is called a 'service institution'. This means it does not produce goods or trade in goods, like a factory or a supermarket. It provides people with a 'service' (i.e. education) like the telephone company and the light and power company which also provides service, not goods.

The university exists to train the sons and daughters of the ruling class and middle class to take their place in life alongside the big capitalists and against the workers. To this end the university turns out many doctors, engineers, scientists, accountants and teachers every year. It provides a 'service'to these people and for this reason it is called a 'service institution'.

As in other service institutions, campus workers tend to be divided up into small groups of workers with direct and close contact with supervisors and customers (in this case students). Workers in the kitchen, halls of residence or faculties are divided up from other workers by the way in which their work is organised into petty sections.

These divisions (which are made worse by the way the campus is spread out over a wide area) and their closeness to supervisors and students infected some workers with that narrow, slavish outlook found in some organisations. They are concerned with 'their' job, with 'their' section and 'their' students alone and with nothing else. Indeed it was not until the strike itself that some workers met each other for the first time! Though they had been working on the same job for years, they 'belonged' to different sections.

Such a state of affairs would have been unlikely in a large production plant in industry such as a shirt factory employing hundreds of workers in one place. In such a work place, the nature of the work welds the workers firmly together. The workers get to know each other at work, learn to judge each other's real practical abilities and good or bad qualities; they develop confidence in each other and together as a class develop a common class outlook to other workers and against their common foe - the capitalists. This outlook, what is called 'class consciousness' while not absent from the campus, was weakened by the 'service' nature of the university.

These small groups into which the work is sub-divided and the way the campus is spread out over a wide area allowed and allows supervisors and 'customers' (i.e. students) to exercise a corrupting influence on the workers, to 'rule' them and to boss them around.

The workers lower their guard as a class and the students and supervisors 'friend them up', 'plant' news carriers amongst them, play off some worker against others and generally sow discord in the workers ranks.

Worst of all the students and supervisors select favourites from among the workers and 'patronise ' them. They give them gifts of old shoes and old clothes - ol' bruk and ol' seven' - address them over-familiarly by their first names, allow workers to carry home food from the kitchen, in order to break down the self respect of workers and to artfully and carefully cultivate in them a sense of inferiority and 'tenk-ye massa, 'gimme-gimme' mentality. The middle class students and supervisors got and continue to get a big kick out of their 'kindness' in sweetening up a few workers with one hand and chastising the mass of the workers with the other.

WHY NO WORKERS' PARTY?

Everyone will immediately recognise these problems - divisions within the workers own ranks, infection with the germs of petty-capitalist selfishness, paternalism - as problems which face not only campus workers. They are everyday problems facing all working people. And all these little difficulties, when taken together boil down to one big problem: there is no party of the working class in existence in Jamaica.

Workers in Jamaica have been unable to form their own party. The capitalists have two parties to defend their interests. But the workers have none to defend theirs and the interests of all progressive minded people. Some workers are even hostile to such a plan. Many workers still feel that the workers cannot help themselves, that black people can't do anything good and so on. They would rather fight for the capitalist and follow his agents, than struggle to build up their own class organisations.

For example, there are workers on campus who still are not members of the UAWU even though they enjoy all the benefit which the UAWU fought for and squeezed out of the big capitalists. Yet the same workers remain 'die hard' supporters of the PNP or JLP who are working in the interests of the capitalists, scheming with them behind the scenes to raise up the cost of living and to pass laws banning strikes, and who remember workers only at election time by giving them free flour, saltfish and a five dollar bill.

Workers such as these do not yet realise that their lot and the lot of other workers has never been and can never be improved by taking the capitalist road - ignoring their own independent working class organisations and clinging to organisations of the capitalist class.

The only way to improve the conditions of the working people, to get rid of low wages, the high cost of living, overwork, unemployment, crime and police brutality is to take the socialist road: to get rid of the class which causes poverty, the high cost of living and overwork - the capitalist class, and to build a truly workers' society - a socialist society.

Only after there are no more capitalists can we build a just society in which not just a few idle capitalists are rich and the masses of the people have nothing; but in which the wealth of the country is owned and controlled by the working class and every man has to work for the benefit of himself and all.

In order to bring this about - to build a truly workers' society run by the workers for the benefit of all, workers must have their own strong organisation struggling for this goal. They must have their own political party to which no capitalists or their supporters can be admitted or can contribute in any way.

As long as workers continue to be fooled by the capitalist class and their agents into thinking that the lot of workers can be better and poverty and oppression can be abolished without getting rid of the capitalist class, who live off the workers' labour, without building socialism, then workers will continue to hang on to capitalist organistaions and will not see the need for their own independent organisation, independent of the capitalist exploiters and oppressors.

But the minute the workers realise that this is not so, that talk of 'social justice' under capitalism is just Joshua using up his sweetmouth to fool up people more, the workers will turn away from the capitalists and see that to have their own party to struggle against their common foe is a 'must'.

Working people are only now beginning to realise that this is so, after generations of being fooled by the capitalist labour unions and the capitalist political parties. But at the time of the university strike in October there was (and still is) no workers' party in Jamaica. For this reason it was hard for the UAWU to rally the working people of the whole country to its side and thus bring about quick and certain victory over the university management.

The absence of such a workers' party weakened the UAWU a lot and allowed the capitalist management to drag out the struggle to their own advantage.

WHY NO UNITED FRONT AGAINST IMPERIALISM?

The absence of a workers' party made up of the best fighters from the workers' ranks and able to rally large masses of people from the working and middle class to assist any single group of workers in their class struggle against the capitalists, was also responsible for the absence of a strong united anti-imperialist front.

What is a united anti-imperialist front? This is an organisation of the working class and the progressive section of the middle class against the big capitalists. These different classes do not forget or get rid of their own organisations but merely come together as a group of organisations under the 'umbrella' of a single organisation united by their struggle against the common enemy - the big capitalists.

The value of such a front is that it can rally large numbers of people who are not workers nor socialists but who are opposed by the big capitalists. Such a front weakens that big section of the capitalist class which is propped up by foreign interests. By so doing it strengthens the struggle for human rights and justice and for a real democ of the people who work for a living.

For such a front to be bold and courageous in its attack on the big capitalists and imperialists, it must h at its foundation a strong Workers' Party. This is because the working class is the strongest advocate of the most complete democracy. The other classes are 'sometimish' in their support of democracy and human rights. Without a Workers' Party behind them to push them along, the other classes easily lose heart and give in to the big capitalis - the mortal enemies of democracy and justice.

The absence of a united front against imperialism ba on a strong workers' party at its foundation added to the difficulties of the UAWU in October. The UAWU not only h difficulty in rallying the working class, but also had di iculties in rallying the progressive section of the middl class to its side. Not only the UAWU is plagued by this problem but all progressive minded people in Jamaica are severely hampered by these same difficulties.

III

STRIKE PREPARATIONS

It was in this general situation, a situation of is ation, that the workers at the university had to face up management.

Isolated as they were, the workers took heart from their collective unity. They drew strength from their so power - a force which ultimately makes them stronger th the capitalists and guarantees them ultimate victory.

But in order to be effective this power which only workers have, must be united and organised. Without unity organisation

the workers are scattered and divided. And when the workers are divided it is they who fall and not the capitalists, as every worker knows from bitter experience.

Realising this, the UAWU had set about building just such a strong organisation. The UAWU did not leave their organisational efforts to the last minute- the day before the strike. From its beginning, the UAWU established a disciplined and democratic organisation.

How was this done? The whole work force at the UWI was divided into departments. Each department, depending on its size, elected at least one (in some cases up to 4) delegates to sit on the ruling body of the union - the Delegates Council. This Council of over 20 delegates met once every week, month after month, year after year and discharged the workers' business. Worker-delegates on the Council held the key posts such as President, Secretary and Treasurer.

As a result of this democratic organisational structure, union affairs were conducted in . . an orderly and businesslike way and the workers were kept fully informed of everything that was taking place.

This was done through general mass meetings, regular bulletins ('Workers Voice'), pamphlets and touring loudspeakers. Unlike workers in other unions, the university worker could at any time get in touch with the union leadership, put forward his opinion, get the view of the officers and know everything that was going on all the time. Nothing was done behind the workers' backs.

Because of this, the workers were confident that their voices would be heard and they took an interest in running the union. They gained confidence and invaluable experience in managing their own affairs in their own interest and with complete success over a period of 18 months. This peacetime experience [illegible] was to stand the workers in good stead in October when the oppressor management refused to grant the workers their rights.

Again and again the union made attempts to get the seven outstanding points settled in negotiations during the last week of

September 1972, postponing plans to strike
It was only a few days before the opening day of the university term on October 2nd and the workers had no desire to disrupt the students' studies. But still the high and mighty management would not negotiate. The union could not even get to meet the senior management of the university - such as the Vice Chancellor or even the Bursar!

The union alerted the workers. The campus opened to students on the second of October and still there was no word from the management. Throughout the rest of that week, the union discussed the strike with the workers and made intensified preparations. On the 2nd of October the Delegates Council suspended its regular business and divided itself into a number of strike sub-committees made up of delegates and the most militant and resolute workers. On Monday the 9th of October the UAWU went on strike.

On that historic morning the workers reported to their battle lines for duty and not to the jobs of their petty slave masters. Students, in a wonderful show of solidarity, closed the campus gates. The workers stood orderly by as car after car of the high and mighty management had to stop and turn back and go home. The workers were now on charge, not them. Workers themselves began to see with their own eyes what a great weapon they had in their hands all this time without even knowing it: the weapon of their collective social power. A new chapter was opening in the political history of Jamaica.

IV

THE STRIKE: First Week: Wrong Strategy, Wrong Tactics.

In spite of efforts which had gone into preparation, the first few days of the strike saw some disorganisation. As always happens in such situations, the plans look pretty on paper, but when the actual day of struggle dawns a lot of confusion and excitement occurs.

In this case too, many mistakes were made. But in this lay the UAWU's strength: it was able to see where mistakes were being made, to bring them out into the open for all to face up to, to quickly correct them, and to recover from them in good time.

The reason for this lies in the nature of the UAWU's leadership. The union was led by the workers themselves who were in the struggle up to their necks with their fellow workers. The leadership therefore had nothing to hide and no secret deals to make behind the workers' backs. This open principled and plain-spoken grass-roots leadership is what kept the UAWU on the right track.

This is the kind of leadership which so many other workers lack and which means that as a result the management easily buys out the workers' struggle.

Even when a union has good grass-roots leadership, many problems of strategy and tactics remain. For the UAWU, the most difficult thing of all was to understand the general political situation in the country and in the world at the time and how this affected the struggle. This required the union to size up the strength of the different forces - those which could support the workers' struggle and those which could support the enemy's struggle. This is always the first step to take in any struggle. The adoption of the right strategy and tactics - whether to attack or whether to retreat and what the outcome of the struggle is - victory or defeat - all of this hinges on this first step - a correct sizing up of the political situation.

The UAWU leaders did not grasp this fully enough. At the early stages of the strike up until the end of the first week, they did not take into account all the things which would affect the struggle. The union leadership tended to look at the campus alone, and to pay little attention to the situation in the whole of the country and indeed of the world - all of which has a big effect on any political struggle.

As a result, the union overestimated its ability to force the management to concede the workers' demands in a few days. Some people made the mistake of thinking that the sheer surprise and inconvenience of the union's timing of the strike, together with the pressure on the university management from the students and the public to re-open the campus quickly, that these things alone would force the management to submit quickly to the just demands of the workers.

But this was not and could not have been so, as events soon proved. The strike was not just a local campus event which could be understood by sizing up the campus situation alone. The university workers were part and parcel of the whole Jamaican working class. The Jamaican working class struggle was the local branch of an international working class struggle against capitalism wherever it exists in any corner of the earth.

On the other side, the university was set up by the British imperialists in the colonial days. The university management was part and parcel of the ruling class and kept the closest ties with the most reactionary sections of this oppressor class - the big capitalists of white, Chinese, Jewish and Syrian descent linked up to international capitalism - to imperialism.

The university workers' struggle to win a five-day, 40-hour working week, for longer maternity leave with pay for female workers and so on, was a struggle which affected all workers on and off campus, inside and outside Jamaica, alike.

On the hand, the university management's stubborn resistance to these just demands was essential, not only

for its own local campus interests, but also in the interests of all the reactionary big capitalists and imperialists who are only concerned with making bigger and bigger profits by forcing up the cost of living and exploiting the poor. Acting with the support of the big capitalists and imperialists, the university management could not allow the campus workers to make a new breakthrough which the rest of the Jamaican working masses as well as other workers would be sure to follow.

The narrow, local, campus appraisal of the struggle overlooked all these basic points. Looking back, it looks like a foolish mistake to have made. 'Foolish' as it may be, it is a mistake commonly made in the struggle of workers and progressive minded people.

The workers and progressive minded people do not always adopt a really international approach. They often 'forget' that the weakness of their particular set of oppressors, is made up for by the strength of the rest of the reactionary big capitalist class (both local and foreign) as a whole. They 'forget' that their particular local struggle is strengthened and can only be victorious when it joins hands with the struggle of all workers everywhere: first of all with workers in the rest of Jamaica; and, just as important, with workers of every nation and race.

The usual consequence of not taking a really international working class outlook is that the real strength of the capitalist management is underestimated and misjudged, while the difficulties facing any workers' struggle in a society dominated by capitalism and the capitalist ways of thinking and living, are played down. Not enough attention is paid to the fact that the struggle under such conditions must be a drawn out one. And so not enough attention is paid to immediately strengthening the workers organisations for the battle and striving to win, from the beginning, the widest, mass, public support for the workers' cause. When, as always happens, the capitalists drag out the struggle, then and only then are hasty efforts made to organise and publicise the struggle. But haste makes waste: and at this point it is often too late.

Events soon forced the UAWU to correct its mistake. For despite the fact that the strike was timed for the second week of term, when the students had already come on the campus and could only have been sent back home with difficulty; despite the fact that supporting the workers' struggle was a spontaneous upsurge of demands from students which resulted in the immediate closure of the gates and the total shutdown of the university; despite the fact that in the midst of this crisis, the senior management of the university was not even in Jamaica; and despite the fact that within the ranks of the management negotiating team which remained behind, they were those who saw the need for a compromise agreement with the workers - in spite of all these things, the management refused to budge on any of the disputed points.

What were these?

1. The 5-day 40-hour working week.
2. Maternity leave - 2 months with pay, one without.
3. Transportation allowance for workers on late duty.
4. Premium pay for night workers.
5. Subsistence allowance for out-of-town work.
6. Vacation leave based on seniority, not wage.
7. Joint consultation and participation of workers on committees making decisions affecting workers.

These are demands which workers all over are fighting for. These are demands which any decent person should have. These are rights which should have been the law of the land in any democratic country long ago. But this cannot be so in a country ruled by the imperialists and big capitalists. The big capitalists and imperialists are die-hard enemies of democracy and human rights. And the university management as part of this class did all they could to deny the

the workers these benefits. They would not even negotiate.

On the other hand, the UAWU adopted a reasonable approach from the beginning. The union sought binding assurances from the management that they would grant the principle of the number 1 demand - the 5-day, 40-hour working week, with the details of its operation to be negotiated.

The union also sought firm assurances from the management that it would move towards the union's position on maternity leave and transportation allowance. On the other points, the union told the management that it was willing to compromise. Thus the workers began their negotiations from a very reasonable position. But the 'educated' management was big and bad - the workers were nobody -so they would not even negotiate.

Although it did not wish to, because of the decisive but flexible action taken by the workers and students on the first day of the strike, the management had to agree at least to meet the union leaders. But they still refused to negotiate seriously in these meetings, claiming that they came only to work out 'a back to work formula'.

Putting its case very forcefully, the UAWU came very close in the first few days to getting the binding assurances it sought in order to return to work with some guarantee that the management would concede benefits for the workers. At several moments it seemed that the differences between the workers and the management were only a matter of words.

The idea that the union was on the verge of a settlement was a widespread feeling among workers and some students. But everytime an agreement seemed close, the big brain intellectuals wriggled out.

They said they would give 'assurances' but not binding ones; that the wording 'binding assurances' was unnecessary - that plain 'assurance' would be just as binding. They said they would agree to the points 'generally' and 'on the whole' but they refused to endorse any particular single point in principle unless the workers first went back

to work. They said that an agreement in principle would leave nothing to negotiate; that the union was 'confusing' a 'work resumption formula' with a final agreement; that the UAWU wanted them to lay all their cards on the table beforehand, when the negotiations had only just begun and so on and so forth, endlessly twisting and turning to confuse and deceive the workers.

But the union leadership was not caught in these traps. It remained firm. The management team therefore had to come out into the open with their reactionary position: no negotiations until there was a full resumption of work.

They wanted the young, inexperienced workers' union to be fooled up by their big words and to bowdown before their delaying tactics. But the big brains forgot that they were not dealing with Shearer, Manley or any of the other capitalist politicians. They were face to face with the militant working class itself. They did not live to see the UAWU sell out its fellow workers and class brothers. The union firmly rejected the back to work ultimatum of the management.

So passed the first day: the management was using delaying tactics and cleverly combining these with empty promises to negotiate after work was resumed. They were hoping that their tactics would wear down the workers, discourage the union leadership and settle the matter on their own terms. But these tactics back-fired.

On the second day of the strike, the union made a big unilateral concession to the management, as a gesture of goodwill. In order to prove to the whole campus that the workers and students were not interested in disrupting the university, but merely wanted justice, the union secured the reopening of the campus gates. Thus the meeting on Tuesday got off to a good start, because of the goodwill of the union.

The meeting had gone on for some time when it was suddenly interrupted. News was brought that the police had broken the picket lines at one of the open gates, smashing

a worker's radio, kicking over the food of other workers and brandishing their guns on workers, students and academics.

The workers were enraged. Many felt that this was a plot cooked up by the management. Many felt that this was behind the delaying tactics of the management - that they treacherously intended to crush the strike, shoot down the workers and lock up their leaders even as they pretended to be negotiating.

The anger of the workers and their supporters boiled over. The workers marched on the negotiating room in a large mass. They confronted the negotiating team and demanded satisfaction.

It was a tense moment. The management negotiators were surrounded by the outraged workers. With great difficulty did the union leadership intervene to save the lives of these very same managers who had been lambasting the UAWU only a few minutes before and who were now shaking for fear and cowering under desks before the workers' anger. The union leadership intervened to protect these people from the workers' wrath because any violence would have been used by the capitalists and the government as an excuse to attack the workers and to prevent them from achieving their demands.

With great difficulty were the workers persuaded by the union leadership to let the management go home free. Many workers felt that the management team ought to be disciplined and made to settle the issues of the strike then and there. These workers did not fully understand the slippery qualities of management people. They did not understand that such types will sign anything to save their skins; but they would go back on their word as soon as they were safe from the workers.

But the union leadership succeeded in calming the workers down. In return, the management had to agree to order the police and army away from the campus and to officially shut down the whole institution. Once again negotiations had failed.

This incident on Tuesday October 10th was the first sign to the workers that they were fighting a stronger enemy than the weaklings on the university campus. It began to dawn on some people that behind the scenes much bigger forces were at work against the workers.

Some workers, losing heart at the stubborness of the management, the emnity of the police and the growing economic pressures, seemed to be in favour of breaking off negotiations totally and attacking the management. Others equally demoralised, wanted the UAWU to take what it could get and then give in and surrender.

But the mass of the workers stood steady. Their support enabled the union leadership to steer away from adventurous acts of desperation on the one hand:: and from giving in and surrendering on the other hand. With the backing of the mass of the workers the union leadership stood firm and used the Tuesday incident to further strengthen the workers ranks. They showed the workers how wicked the capitalists are and so raised the workers' class consciousness to a higher level.

At the same time the UAWU took immediate steps to tighten up and broaden the base of its organisation.

On Wednesday, a Worker/Student Strike Committee was set up, incorporating the older Strike Committee of the Delegates Council. This new strike committee began to issue the first in a series of daily bulletins to the workers, summing up each day's events for all to know and understand.

It reorganised on a more systematic basis the picketing of gates (which remained closed since the Tuesday incident). It put the arrangements for feeding workers and students on a sounder footing, and it organised panel discussions for the workers to spread their views to the rest of the university campus - to students, other non-academic staff and to academics.

This was no ordinary strike in which the workers were

kept in the dark. Everything the leadership and the union said and did, the workers knew; everything the workers wanted, the leadership had to consider; everything which was in the workers' interests, the leadership had to follow.

All this meant that the workers and the union got stronger and more united. Many more workers and students were drawn in to help with leaflets, food, organising entertainment and so on.

But all these reforms were still governed by the old narrow view of the struggle, as one with the university management alone. The tactics of tightening up and broadening the base of the struggle were pursued on the campus only and not throughout the length and bredth of the country and with the assistance of progressive forces abroad. The union still hoped that by applying such local tactics the pressure on the management would be hot enough to force a quick settlement favourable to the workers.

The union was still not getting rid of the wrong idea that so many workers in Jamaica have. They still did not understand that a strike is a class war between all workers and all capitalists; that a strike is not only the local business of the particular set of workers and capitalists on strike and concerns all other workers everywhere, in Jamaica and in the world. The university workers like many other Jamaican workers did not sufficiently understand this national and international link-up between every group of workers in the world; they did not sufficiently understand the tie-up of the university management with big local and international capitalists. And for this the union leadership is to blame:for not adopting a truly international working class approach from the beginning.

Even though it continued to make this big mistake, the reform measures adopted by the union from Wednesday, improved the union's strength a lot. And so the union pressed the management for a resumption of negotiations.

Because of the breakdown on the campus level, the union and the management met at the Ministry of Labour. This was on Friday, October 13. By this time public attention had been aroused by the strike and the pressure on the management for a settlement was very hot.

The union was received very cordially by the government official of the Ministry of Labour. The university management negotiating team was jumpy and unsure of itself. Confidence was high on the workers' side that a settlement would be reached that weekend.

These feelings were strengthened by a new work resumption plan which one of the government officials at the Ministry of Labour put forward to the two parties. As the government conciliation officer, this official proposed the following plan: the university management to agree in principle to the 5-day 40-hour week week and to modify their position on paid maternity leave and night transportation; the workers to agree to return to work and to negotiate the precise details of the agreement on all the 7 outstanding points

The Ministry official threw the whole weight of the government's authority behind this proposal. After some discussion amongst itself, the UAWU leadership accepted this proposal on behalf of the workers. It was then presented to the management.

Heatedly and excitedly, they critised the government's proposal. Because it was fair, they rejected it as 'irregular' and'unheard of' in the history of labour struggles. Like other employers, they insisted that the meeting stuck to finding only a 'back to work formula' and that the strike be called off completely first, without the slightest assurances being given by them that they would ever negotiate.

There was deadlock. A more senior government official of the Ministry was called in. The situation was

presented to him: the UAWU leaders told him that they were willing to compromise and accept the government proposal. But the university management was stubborn. They dismissed the government plan out of hand and brought pressure to force the senior government official to back down. The government gave in and withdrew their proposal because of the unreasonable attitude of the management. At this point, the UAWU leadership had no choice but to pull out of such a mockery of 'negotiations' which once again had been sabotaged by the management.

This back-tracking of the government of Jamaica away from the workers rights opened the eyes of many people to the real scope and nature of the struggle. It showed the union and the workers that they were not only fighting the university management but a much bigger enemy which could cow the government.

It was clear now that the hopes that the workers' struggle would end in a quick victory for the union had no basis in fact. It produced a complete re-appraisal of the whole situation, of strategy tactics and organisation.

Hard questions now had to be faced up to: what was the nature of this enemy of the workers? What was was its economic and political strength? What other classes supported it and which classes could be counted on to oppose it? What was its organisational, propoganda and agitational capability and preparedness? What was its big strength? What was its basic weakness? These questions were examined under a microscope by the UAWU.

It was now it became clear that the workers had taken on not just the university weaklings, but the big capitalists - the rich white, Jewish, Syrian, Chinese and brownskin capitalists who rule Jamaica with an iron hand.

What was (and is) the big strength of this group? First of all their MONEY, and then their POWER over the government - the law courts, the army and the police.

What was (and is) the big weakness of this group?

THEIR DISTANCE FROM THE MASS OF JAMAICANS AND THEIR HATRED FOR BLACK PEOPLE.

What did the workers' strategy have to be then? To push a wedge and widen the gap further between these rich racist parasites and the mass of Jamaicans of all classes.

ON TO THE SECOND WEEK: New Strategy, New Tactics

What was the basis of this new strategy? To win over the mass of the campus workers and the progressive section of the middle class to the university workers' side. And, on the basis of an alliance between the workers and the progressive sections of the middle class, to win the widest possible support for the just and democratic demands of the workers; to isolate the parasites and slavedrivers inside and outside the university management and show them up for what they are - enemies of democracy and justice and vampires on the whole society.

This new strategy was based on a correct international outlook which sized up the whole political situation both in Jamaica and abroad. But it required a change in the union's tactics for it to take effect.

In the first week, the workers were pushing the management anxiously for a settlement. The management knew this, saw it as a sign of weakness and decided to starve the workers out. Their spies reported to them that the workers were losing hope; that the picket lines were falling to pieces - that fewer and fewer workers were turning out to picket duty and only a hard core of militants was holding out; that the spirit of the first few days of the strike had worn off, and that the masses of the workers were now 'coming back to their senses' as the first week's payday came and went without a penny being received. The management 'brains' were sure that if they stood firm and made empty promises to some workers that all would be well, while threatening other workers with victimization, that the whole strike would collapse.

But these class prejudiced brains were wrong. With their inbred contempt for black working people, how could

they have known of the fires blazing in the workers' hearts?! In their idleness and luxury, how could they have realized what immense sacrifices, what endless fortitude, the workers were capable of?! They knew nothing of these fighting qualities of the workers, so all their petty schemes amounted to nothing. They tested the workers' will and found out that it was made of steel.

The union's new strategy also tested the workers' will but in a different way. The new strategy was based on winning the working masses including the progressive section of the middle class public over to the workers' side. But such a thing could not be done overnight. For this to be achieved time was necessary. So the union leadership had to prepare the workers for a drawn out struggle. Not only for a drawn out struggle, but for a new sort of struggle: a struggle for people's support. This was an entirely new thing for the workers to be engaged in.

Not everyone was in favour of or understood the need for this new strategy. Some felt that the union should not stoop to seek support from the middle class. They rejected the support of the progressive minded section of the middle class as tarnished and corrupted support.

They did not understand that there is a sound basis for the alliance between the working class and the progressive middle class against our common foe - the big capitalists. They did not understand that this alliance is not only useful but essential for both the working class and the progressive sections of the middle class if we are ever to overcome the high cost of living, exploitation and oppression. They did not understand that both the working class and the middle class have a common interest in the preservation and expansion of human rights while the big capitalists are the sworn enemies of democracy and a decent standard of living for all. Some people did not understand any of these things.

They insisted that the middle class is 'sometimish' on the vital issues of the people's struggle. And on this point they are absolutely right. They objected further that

the middle class support is like a Spanish machete - it cuts both sides. Sometines it cuts the workers and sometimes it cuts the big capitalists. Again this is true.

But none of this means that the workers must not work with these people. What it means is that only on some things do the workers and the middle class have a common interest; only on some things under certain conditions can they form an alliance with the middle class.

What are the things on which the working class and the progressive middle class fight a common battle against a single enemy? This is so whenever the fight is for human rights and justice for a lower cost of living and a higher standard of living and against racial oppression.

What are the times when the working class will have to fight alone? When the fight is for the workers to be in charge of our society, when the fight is directly for socialism.

Until that day comes, there are many inportant issues upon which the working class and the progressive middle class share genuine common interests. And in order to bring that day closer, the workers and the progressive middle class, together must fight first in the early rounds of the fight against the big capitalists.

During this fight, all the time, the workers have to be on their guard against the 'sometimish' nature of the progressive middle class. All the time the worker has to watch these middle class allies of his like a hawk, remembering always that the progressive middle class too does not want the workers to be in charge of our society. But at the same time, the workers and the progressive middle class must ally together to win these common battles for democracy which lie on the road to socialism. These are very important principles to understand and to practice. But not everybody understood them.

However the majority of the workers supported the new strategy proposed by the union leadership. They rose to the challenge. From that very Friday night the union moved into

high gear. The Workers/Student Strike Committee was broken down into a number of sub-committees - finance, publicity, mobilisation, food, security and defence. Intensified efforts were made to bring out workers who had so far not taken an active part in the strike and had treated the strike as as holiday.

A system of combining daily face-to-face gate meetings with general mass meetings was established in order to improve the ordinary workers' knowledge and participation in the struggle. A ban on alcohol was enforced at the picket lines and close attention was paid to the task of orderly and disciplined picketing. An entertainment sub-committee was set up and a massive fund-raising drive (which raised $900) was launched. All of these reforms were taken to strengthen the union on the home front.

At the same time the struggle and the workers' cause had to be carried to the public outside the university, to all progressive forces in the Caribbean and to workers' organisations around the world. Cables and letters asking for support were sent to the Jamaica Council on Human Rights, the Jamaica Youth Council, the PNP Youth Organisation and to many others. Radio time was booked and space in the newspapers bought by the union, to let the whole country know of the justice of the workers' demands, their willingness to negotiate, and of the stubborn and reactionary policies of the university administration. A series of public meetings were planned for working class areas near to the campus and other actions to mobilize the support of the working and middle classes were considered. These were measures which were applied to strengthen the 'foreign' battle-front.

Their 'blitz' by the UAWU was a great success. Having unified its ranks and recovered from the early mistakes, the workers seized the initiative from the high and mighty, lazy university management. The workers fearlessly and skillfully spread this case up and down Jamaica and abroad. The clumsy and fumbling management was stunned by this campaign and tried desperately to hide its anti-working class schemes

from the glare of publicity which was showing them up.

THE PROPOSAL TO RE-OPEN THE GATES

In this situation, the capitalist management was in a tight corner. They could no longer rely soley on their old delaying-starvation tactics because of public pressure to re-open the university campus before the whole term was wasted. There was thus a clear limit beyond which they could no longer delay. They needed and early settlement of the strike in order not to set back the students' studies for one whole year. Besides, it was obvious that, while their delaying tactics may have put the union to a severe test, they had failed to break the strike. So they were in a soup. They did not know what to do now.

Their only hope seemed to be to strike a sudden death blow against the workers using the army and the police. Some pretext had to be found to justify such a reactionary step before the people. And these evil moves would have to be made suddenly and right away.

The union leadership began to consider the situation. Gradually it became clear that if such repression was being planned then the closure of the campus gates (which remained closed by order of the university management since the incident on Tuesday, October 10) was the obvious and perfect excuse to bring on the police and soldiers to break up the strike. It seemed that a military-police attack on the workers, justified to the public on the grounds of re-opening the campus gates, was a real likelihood.

The union suspected that Marshall, the white Barbadian lawyer and head of the university management had already returned to Jamaica from the Thursday of the first week of the strike. It suspected that he was lying low for the moment and pushing the black people in the management into the front using them as puppets and agents against the workers. But there was no proof of this. On the weekend of the 14th and 15th October, there was defin te information that Marshall was back in the island. And according to reliable report,

he was meeting with Manley behind closed doors.

The union suspected that a plot was being cooked up against the workers. And so a decisive step was taken by the workers that weekend. A step, which, together with what followed shortly after, was the single most important and difficult step of the entire strike struggle. The union decided on the weekend of October 14th and 15th that it would propose to students and management that the gates be re-opened subject to certain conditions.

- That management agrees to resume talks at the same time on the seven points in dispute with a view to giving the union the binding assurances, in particular on the 40-hour week, which will allow negotiations to be completed.

- That WIGUT(West Indies Group of University Teachers) agrees to advise its mambers to honour the picket line and not to resume classes until evidence is provided that serious negotiations are underway.

- That the Guild of Undergraduates agrees to advise its members to honour the picket line and not to attend classes until evidence is provided that serious negotiations are underway.

- That the management of the university agrees to advise the police high command before talks begin to instruct the police to stay away from the campus and its precincts during the talks.

- That management agrees to enter negotiations on the student demands with the Guild of Undergraduates immediately after talks with the union have been concluded.

These proposals certainly turned the tables on those who were plotting to use the closing of the university gates as an excuse to bring police and soldiers against the workers and break the strike. It removed the excuse - the closure of the gates - which the reactionaries needed to justify any

acts of repression. It introduced confusion into their ranks and goaded them into taking rash actions.

But by the same token, these moves put a great strain on the workers. Whereas up to this point they had been on the attack, now they were being asked by their leadership to retreat. Whereas in the first week, their militancy was under fire from the capitalists, now it would be their will power and discipline which would be tested. The workers were being asked by their union leadership to propose and approve a course of action which could easily lead to the partial reopening of the campus (resumption of lectures and administration) while they were still out on strike.

Many workers and students felt that such a plan could not work at all and had serious doubts about it. . Many feared that the mass of the workers had only been able to hold out so far because the rest of the campus was shut down by the students; and that once a major part of the campus such as teaching resumed, then the majority of the workers would lose heart and drift back to work one by one. They feared that the endurance and discipline to hold out against the management under such conditions, was lacking in their own ranks.

In addition they did not see how the new tactics of publicity and mobilization would win the rest of the working class and the progressive middle class onto their side. And even if they did get public support, they did not see why this would force the management to bow.

These doubts were understandable because this sort of broad class struggle was a completely new experience for the workers. This strategy was a complex one and it could not even promise a clear-cut victory.

Slowly and carefully, the union leadership explained over and over the whole situation for the benefit of the workers and the students. Questions were answered, doubts cleared up and it was shown why the opening of the gate was in the workers' interest.

The reasons for the tactical retreat of the union was explained by the strength of the workers' real enemy - the big local and foreign capitalists. The need to win the broadest public support in order to defeat this strong enemy was also carefully explained.

The urgency of the danger posed by the gate-closure was gone over again and again. The union leadership pointed out to the workers that these people who felt that the union should satisfy itself with what had been already won and give in to the management, and other people who were against any compromise at all, belonged to the same camp, when you looked into it. When you looked into it both of these groups were made up of 'doubting Thomases'. Both of them did not believe in their own will power and in the endurance of other workers. Both were of little faith in the working class. Both wanted a quick end to the struggle: one by surrendering, the other by a desperate attack on the management. Both groups were in the wrong, because there can be no quick end when you are fighting a strong enemy.

The union leadership reminded the workers of how much hardship they had put up with for years upon years from the university management. It reminded the workers of the many people who had been kept as "casual' labour by the university management for over 10 years without any rights at all. It reminded the workers of the big men and women amongst them - some of them grandfathers and grandmothers who had put up with $12 a week pay for years and years. It was coward to think that workers who had suffered these terrible hardships for many years could not hold out for their own sake, in their own cause, for a month.

Each man presented and defended his views. The strong convictions of the union leadership swung the majority of the workers over to the correct side. And so the proposals to re-open the gates were made to the university management on Monday.

On Tuesday morning, the reply of the manager of the university - Marshall - was splashed across the front page

of the Daily Gleaner. In a rage the capitalists tried to frighten the whole academic community and the general public by threatening 'indefinite shutdown of the university'. They attacked and tried to frighten everybody, the workers, the students, the lecturers and the general public. Marshall rejected the union's proposals as 'an ultimatum to the university', showing 'contempt' etc. etc.

On the proposal to ban the police from the campus Marshall, in his high and mighty words, rejected 'this piece of gratuitous advice'. He reminded WIGUT of their teaching duties to the university 'for which its members were being paid'. Marshall warned the students trat they 'would be wrong to assume' that the teaching term would be extended to make up for the study time lost during the strike. He attempted to frighten the vice-president of the UAWU, Dr. Trevor Munroe with the ridiculous charge that his fight alongside the workers amounted to 'outside work' and was against university rules.

"He has never asked my permission for any of the work he is engaged in", Dr. Marshall said of the teacher-cum-trade union leader" (Daily Gleaner, Oct. 17, 1972)

These wild attacks on the academics, the students, the workers and the general public did the workers' cause a great deal of good. The biased and one-sided nature of Marshall's statement which got wide publicity on radio and T.V. - people began to wonder who was this whiteman Marshall that he could be so big and bad. Wide interest was aroused in the university workers' struggle. Marshall's scatter-shot attack created sympathy for the UAWU's struggle for human rights and social justice among wide sections of the public.

The attitude of the public became clear in the many financial contributions which the union began to receive at this time. Heartened by this, the union took its time in considering the full meaning of Marshall's reply.

It seemed even more clearly then before to be a bait to catch the workers, to tempt them to continue to support

the closure of the campus gates. The feeling was more certain than before in the union leadership, that a pretext was being laid with massive publicity, for a military attack against the workers.

The union did not bother to wait on proof that this was being planned. The union leadership knew that if your hand is in the tiger's mouth, you have to take time take it out. Having briefed tha workers, with the assistance of fraternal unions in the Independent Trade Union Action Council, on their rights and duties as peaceful picketers, and consulted with the students, the union leadership proposed an even more difficult step for the workers to take. It proposed to the workers that in reply to Marshall's statement, the union should propose that the campus gates be re-opened unconditionally on Tuesday, 17th October at 10.00 am.

It is difficult to see now, after the battle has been won, how controversial such a proposal was at the time. The same objections, the same problems which had been raised before by 'the doubters' on both sides were raised all over again. But this time the'doubting Thomases' were more forceful. For this new step was going to be the acid test of the workers' will power and discipline.

Again the same explanation and replies were given to the questions. Once more each man stated his views and defended them. And once more the workers put their trust in the tactics of the union leadership, risky as they were.

The union decided on Tuesday to propose that the campus gates be re-opened. But this was not released to the press until Tuesday night. The reason for this was that there was a meeting of academic and senior administrative staff called by WIGUT at Mona Hotel for that very night.

At this meeting, the anti-working class wing of the academic community made up mainly of white ex-patraites and their black friends intended to use the issue of the closure of the gates to attack the union. Even though it was Marshall's own assistant - Augier - who had officially closed

the campus on Tuesday, October 10th, they wanted to blame the workers and students for this.

The racist wing of academics and administrators wished to distort the facts: they wanted everyone to believe that the workers were the ones who had closed the gates because the workers were on strike and picketing the gates. But this was a lie: it was Augier who had ordered the campus closed on Tuesday. Yet this did not deter the right wing. Their plan was to get the union condemned on this account at the Mona Hotel meeting. By so doing they would give students and other staff on campus as well as the general public a bad impression of the union. But they did not succeed in carrying out these plans of their's.

A decision to propose to the management that the gates be re-opened had been taken by the UAWU, but the reactionary academics amd administrators did not know. At the meeting at Mona Hotel they launched into a wild assault on the workers and their union. They saved up their foulest abuse for the vice-president of the UAWU who was at the meeting and proposed a resolution to the meeting condemning the union for keeping the campus closed.

Just before this resolution was put to the vote, the vice-president of the UAWU spoke. He rebuked and warned the racists and their friends for their wild accusations and racial insults. Then calmly, he informed them that the UAWU had already proposed to the university management that the campus gates be re-opened unconditionally.

The racists and their friends were taken completely by surprise and could not say a word. The progressive academics, sensing that the reactionaries were on the defensive, seized the initiative and proposed a resolution endorsing the union's action. This motion was passed. To the shock of the right wing, another motion was proposed censuring Marshall for failing to administer the university satisfactorily. Sensing that a disastrous defeat was coming, the racists staged an incident that broke up the meeting before this resolution could be put to the vote.

Marshall narrowly escaped censure by the majority of the academic community. The plans of the racists had backfired. An important victory had been won by the workers on their home front.

The resolutions which were passed at this WIGUT meeting stated:

"This meeting:

a) views with grave concern the closure of the university.

b) endorses the decision of the union and the Guild of Undergraduates to restore unimpeded access to the university.

c) calls upon the university administration to reopen the university and to begin serious negotiations on the outstanding issues, giving the assurance that it is willing to modify its present position particularly in respect to the 5-day week and maternity leave".

Later on, Marshall was to complain bitterly against these resolutions. On the home front they helped to turn the tables on the management and on the 'foreign front' they helped to give the general public a fair picture of the reasonable stand of the UAWU against a wicked management. This was the first success in applying the new strategy of winning the broadest support for the workers' cause.

V

THE GATES ARE OPENED: A NEW SITUATION

Despite this success, the most difficult problems remained for the workers to face. For one thing, the call for resumption of negotiations had been ignored by the management. In addition, the oppressors had still not given up hope of provoking an anti-union incident.

Why did the university management ignore the call of the workers, students, lecturers and the general public for a resumption of negotiations? The reason was this: they figured that in the new situation, with the campus gates now re-opened, they ought to try delaying tactics once again.

Their idea was that the re-opening of the campus would lead to the return to work of the students, lecturers and non-academic staff; and so the workers alone would remain off their jobs. They wished to cut off the workers' support. In such a situation of isolation they felt that the workers would break down under the pressure, give up, and return to work one-by-one.

Thus, if the management could get students. academics, and non-unionised staff to resume work, and if the management at the same time refused even to meet the union for negotiations, they would soon have the workers in a tight corner - in complete isolation.

All the workers in Jamaica and elsewhere will remember the times when their own management used these very same starvation tactics against them in their struggles. All workers will remember how hard it was for them to beat back these tactics.

These were the plans which the management had in mind when the gates of the campus were opened on Wednesday, Oct. 18th. These were the reasons why they still were holding out against even meeting the union for negotiations.

THE McIVER INCIDENT: Manley supports the big capitalists

The UAWU strained every nerve to stand firm at the picketed gates now opened to traffic. With DISCIPLINE AND IN A PEACEFUL WAY, the workers appealed to people not to break their picket line: and by using a CORRECT, PRINCIPLED APPROACH, the workers succeeded in winning the co-operation of the majority of the public.

But not all. In the middle of the day on Wednesday, a white ex-patriate lecturer in the Department of Medicine,

Cecil McIver, son-in,law of Desnoes, the big (D&G) capitalists, decided that he was too big and important to be asked to stop at a picket line by some ordinary black workers. He did not stop, but drove recklessly through the gates and, it was reported, hit a worker with his car.

With the assistance of the workers McIver was found and turned over to the police, without any violence against him by the very workers whose lives he had just endangered.

The big capitalist relatives and friends of McIver and the university management seized on this incident. They blew it up in the press, hoping to use it to turn public opinion against the workers.

"Gang Invasion Drama at Mona Campus" screamed the front page story in the Daily Gleaner on Thursday morning. The big capitalists tried to whip up the greatest tension and a crisis atmosphere in the country over this incident which they had provoked. It seemed that the capitalists had gone back to the old attempt to find an excuse for military repression against the workers. Many people expected army and police intervention early Thursday morning. This belief was strengthened by the announcement that the Prime Minister, Michael Manley, would speak on the university strike after mid-day on that day.

The union leadership alerted the workers to expect the worst. The need for the greatest discipline and coolness in the face of the new threat was urged on all. The fighting spirit of the workers was aroused. All were ready to resist any acts of repression,by force, if it came to that.

The union booked radio time on the same station for 15 minutes before Manley was due to speak. The president of the UAWU, Mr. Douglas Jones, himself a worker, went on the air and explained to the whole country the truth behind the McIver incident. He showed how long the workers had suffered at the hands of the management, how just the workers' demands were and how the workers were waging a peaceful, legal, struggle. He gave the public the plain truth.

To this day, it is not certain what effect this speech had on what Manley decided to do. It is not known whether more severe repression had been planned, but was undercut and put off because of the speech of the president of the UAWU.

What is known is that Manley's speech which was due right after, was delayed without an explanation for many minutes. Many people believe that this delay was caused by last minute changes which had to be hastily introduced into Manley's speech, because the talk of the president of the UAWU had exposed the reactionary plots being hatched against the workers. Many people believe that the president's speech was responsible for holding the government back from crushing the workers with the army and police. But no one knows for certain.

As it was, Manley did come out strongly on the side of the big capitalists. Manley, who was quiet as a mouse about the Tuesday incident when the police assaulted the workers, now found his voice to loudly defend the white son-in-law of the big capitalist Desnoes.

In a one-sided version of the McIver incident, without the slightest attempt to get the workers' side of the story, Manley stated that he had been informed that ' a hospital consultant was assaulted by a gang of men'.

Manley, the same Manley who had called upon students to march and lie down in the streets with him during the JBC strike in 1964, used the McIver incident to attack the students for supporting the workers.

Manley declared that he would never allow any negotiations to be resumed until 4 conditions were met:

"Firstly, the university authorities must resume their academic and administrative work.

"Secondly, the students must return to their classes.

"Thirdly, there must be unimpeded access to the students

and staff to the facilities and facilities of the university.

"Fourthly, the picket lines must be established in accordance with the laws of Jamaica which require that picketing should be peaceful and that only workers directly involved in a dispute may take part in picketing."

These were the proposals of the Manley government. The same government which promised workers and middle class people that 'better must come'. The same government which today is winking at the brutal exploitation of all Jamaicans by the capitalists raising up the cost of living on us. The same government which is preparing behind the scenes so-called 'Industrial Relations Act' which takes away from the workers their only weapon - the right to strike. The Manley government supported the university management and the big capitalists then and they continue to do so now.

What did Manley's '4 conditions' boil down to? They required that the workers should be left to stand as alone as possible, as much at the mercy of the management as possible, before any meeting could even be arranged. This is how pro-capitalist 'trade union leaders' defend the workers' cause!

Yet for all this, the Manley government was not able to crush the workers with the army. As a result of the quick and skillful moves of the union Manley had to cool down. He had to <u>say</u> that he was restricting the police to a 'discreet, impartial, non-provocative presence at picket lines until the strike was over. He had to <u>say</u> that he ordered the police to be fair. But no worker was fooled by these big words. Workers look at <u>deeds</u>, not works. And Manley's deed was to side with the capitalists in every way.

THE FINAL WEEK: VICTORY

Thus passed the second week of the strike. Manley had used the power of the government to hit out against the workers and to side with the big capitalists. He had given the workers an ultimatum.

Naturally the university management was glad. They gladly accepted Manley's 'conditions'. They began to look for ways to start up back the university and to starve out the workers. They began to hint that they intended to drag out the struggle until the workers surrendered.

The UAWU had no choice but to go along with Manley's ultimatum. But the union stressed the need to resume negotiations as soon as possible. The union redoubled its efforts to win the support of other workers and progressive people on and off campus, especially the university students who now had a key role to play.

On Monday, 23rd October, the campus was officially reopened. The university management launched its campaign to isolate the workers from the rest of the academic community, especially the students, and to have everything and everyone on the campus working smoothly except the UAWU workers. They announced the resumption of lectures and warned the students and lecturers to attend them. At the same time they stalled on the question of resuming negotiations at the Ministry of Labour, claiming that 'normalcy' had not been restored on the campus.

The union leadership realized at this point that everything hinged on its ability to keep the fighting spirit and discipline of the workers at the highest pitch and to step up the efforts to win wide support.

To this end a radio broadcast was made by the president of the UAWU to the public over the weekend. In this broadcast the president again stressed the reasonable and just nature of the workers' stand. He once again gave examples of the stubborn resistance of the management to fair proposals. He called upon the public to support the workers in their struggles.

At the same time progressive students struggled to rally the majority of the student body to the workers' side. Progressive students explained to the student body what the workers' struggle was over; and explained that workers and

and all progressive people had a common interest in fighting for human rights and a better life for all.

With some difficulty they won the majority of the students over to the point of view of urging the university management to resume negotiations immediately. Although the majority of the students, because of petty capitalist brainwashing, would not give their full support to the workers by staying away from lectures, a big section of students did not let down the workers. They still gave the workers their full support as in the past.

It was clear that the student body was deeply divided on the strike and that a very large section of the students would continue to support the workers' cause. This was a decisive development. It killed the hopes of the university management of cut off the workers from the rest of the campus. The management's spies at the big student meeting on Monday morning had to report to their bosses that their plans were not working out.

Still, the university management continued to refuse to fac facts. The fact was that classes were 'officially' resumed on campus, but almost no teaching was taking place. The workers and their allies were still on top of the situation.

. Manley's '4 conditions' had been met. The union had been more than reasonable, had retreated, but was still strong. Students, progressive academics and the general public were calling for a just settlement of the strike. So the university management began to feel the pressure. They were forced to say that they would attend a negotiation meeting with the UAWU at the Ministry of Labour on Tuesday. So they said.

But actions speak louder than voices: they were not really ready to negotiate yet. They were still stalling. They still harboured hopes that somehow the situation on campus would shape up to their advantage and that the workers' will power would fade out. So they 'hemmed' and 'hawed' the whole time Tuesday and in to Wednesday at the Ministry

of Labour. They were still blindly refusing to alter their position on any of the 7 points in dispute and still insisting on the full resumption of work by all workers before any negotiation.

In reply, the union kept up a steady flow of publicity exposing the bad faith of the management to the public. The union pointed out to the public on Wednesday 25th:-

> "The management's conditions for the continuation of discussion on the substantive points at no stage required an end to the strike.
> "The Guild of Undergraduates, the academic staff of the UWI and the Jamaica Council of Churches all have called on the management to begin serious talks immediately after certain conditions including those laid down by the Prime Minister, had been met. The Vice Chancellor stated yesterday, that these conditions have been met. Nevertheless, the management refused to discuss any of the points in dispute before a complete return to work by the UWI employees"

In its effort to wear out the workers' will, the management was even going back on some of their earlier negotiating positions at this late stage. They tried all kinds of 'scare tactics' to frighten the workers and to destroy public support for the fight for justice.

An example of this is what happened on Thursday morning. That morning workers were amazed to wake up and find the following big headlines splashed across the front page of the Gleaner.

"MARSHALL UNABLE TO ENSURE SAFETY,,AS SECURITY MEN STRIKE. GOVT. ORDERS POLICE TO PATROL UWI".

After failing to obtain police repression against the workers on 2 previous occasions another desperate attempt was being made. But the workers were now familiar with these old tricks. They were not frightened at all.

Promptly, the president of the UAWU denied these Gleaner reports. He let the public know that throughout the entire strike it had been the deliberate policy of the union not to call out the security workers on strike. The union well knew that any such action would give an excuse to those who wanted to sabotage the workers' struggle. And so it had established a firm policy on this matter from the beginning. Marshall's statement in the Thursday Gleaner was wrong. The management were trying to show the workers up to the public in a bad light and so sabotage the negotiations taking place at the Ministry of Labour.

This denial by the union president was broadcast on the radio that same Thursday morning. So the university management had no excuse to break off the negotiating that day. They had to attend again at the Ministry of Labour on Thursday evening or openly show up their wickedness to the whole Jamaica.

The negotiations on Thursday took place in a situation which more support was on the union's side than on the management's. The campus was still effectively closed with a large body of students and some academics supporting the workers. The workers were still manning the picket lines in a disciplined and orderly fashion. The general public was very favourable to the workers and strongly insistent on a quick negotiated settlement. It was plain that the management's plans to have the campus running smoothly without the workers and so to isolate and demoralize them had failed miserably. So they had to be a little bit more reasonable at the negotiating table.

After much discussion, especially on the no-victimization clause, on which they were most stubborn, an agreement was reached. The agreement said:

"the university agrees to improve its position on the points in dispute, as stated at the commencement of the strike; and

"the union undertakes to modify its position on the points in dispute, as stated at the commencement of the strike"

Put in ordinary language, this meant that the union had won an agreement on the 5-day, 40-hour working week and part of its demands on paid maternity leave (up to 6 weeks) and on night transportation. On the other 4 points the union made concessions to the management.

It was a victory for the workers. After 3 weeks of self-sacrifice and hot pressure, the will-power of the workers had triumphed. The correctness of the political strategy of the union leadership was demonstrated in practice.

The joy of the workers was boundless as the news spread that a victory had been won. Not only on the university campus, but all over Jamaica and abroad fellow workers and progressive people were uplifted by this hardwon, but historic victory of the workers.

In the camp of the big capitalists gloom reigned. After over 30 years of rule, they had suffered their first big defeat by the people of Jamaica. They were in a rage. They held the union leadership responsible for this set back. Right away they began to plan their revenge against the UAWU and the people of Jamaica.

VI

LESSONS FOR OUR STRUGGLE:

THE CAPITALISTS TAKE REVENGE

The workers went back to work in the first week of November. Students went back to study, lecturers went back to teaching. The whole campus returned to peace and quiet. Who would have thought that the university management was scheming to re-open old sores and to resume battle on old

issues settled by the strike? But so it was.

Defeated by the workers themselves, they tried the next best thing. They launched an attack on the progressive students and academics who fought alongside the workers. They announced a so-called "Commission of Inquiry" into the strike. They set up a so-called 'rofessional Committee' to try the vice-president of the UAWU, Dr. Trevor Munroe and a lecturer in the Department of Economics, Mr. Bobby Figueroa.

At the same time as this victimization was going on at the campus the wickedness of the big capitalists outside the university was reaching new heights. Who can forget the threat by Matalon to fire almost two thousand Public Cleansing Workers because they went on strike for better wages and improved working conditions. The strike-breaking by Matalon was successful and showed the other capitalists how to intimidate and crush the workers' struggle.

Then in league with the big foreign capitalists, they began to raise up the cost of living on us to a murderous level. Until today saltfish is selling at $1.36 per lb., flour is 15¢ per lb. and a quart bottle of cooking oil costs $1.00!!

With massive public support, the vice presidnet of the UAWU was able to fight off the attempts of the big capitalists to victimize him. They failed to get him dismissed from the university staff as they wished, because the workers and progressive middle class people of Jamaica would not allow it.

But the capitalists have not given up their wicked plans against the UAWU. They have not abandoned their schemes to suck the working class and the progressive middle class dry through the high cost of living. Even now they are hatching a new and evil plot.

From statements by big capitalists in the newspapers and from government ministers it is now out in the open that the Manley government has prepared a new Industrial Relations Act.

The capitalists have been boasting that this law will have 'teeth' - teeth that will bite the workers. They mean by this that the law will ban strikes. The new law being cooked up by Manley and the big capitalists will take away the only weapon which the workers has to fight exploitation and the high cost of living - the strike weapon.

Many workers died in 1938 to win this vital weapon. Today in 1973 Shearer, Manley and the big capitalists are planning to take this hard won right away from the workers with the stroke of a pen!

Workers and all progressive people must fight this plot with all their might. For if the workers lose this right, not only they but the whole middle class as well will be at the mercy of the big Chinese, Jewish, White and Syrian capitalists. Jamaica will rue the day that this wicked came to pass.

To be able to fight this act, we must study the university strike carefully and learn the main lessons for our coming struggles.

1) First of all that THE MAIN ENEMY OF OUR PEOPLE IS THE BIG CAPITALISTS. They are the ones who burden the working people and the middle class with a high cost of living. They are the ones who hate black people and everything to do with Africa. They are the ones who have special privileges for themselves and try to take away the rights of everyone else.

2) Secondly, THE MAIN FORCE FOR PROGRESS IN JAMAICA IS THE WORKING CLASS AND ITS STRUGGLE FOR A BETTER LIFE. This is the class which knows what it is to suffer. It has lived in exploitation and oppression all its life. It therefore wishes only a better life for itself and for all people.

3) Thirdly, THE MAIN ALLY OF THE WORKING CLASS IS THE PROGRESSIVE SECTION OF THE MIDDLE CLASS. These people are also burdened by the high cost of living

and also stand for democracy and a better life for all. Even though their situation sometimes makes them unreliable and they are too weak to face the capitalists alone they can lend valuable assistance to the workers' struggles, and sometimes their support can make the difference between victory and defeat.

4) Fourthly THE PEOPLE'S STRUGGLE MUST BE WELL PLANNED AND ORGANISED. Every man must be free to put forward his opinion, support the action he feels is right and carry out the decisions of the majority. Only in this way will there be no confusion: the workers' organisation must be able to act swiftly and efficiently.

5) Fifthly, THE WORKERS AND PROGRESSIVE MIDDLE CLASS MUST BE ON THEIR GUARD AGAINST TRAITORS AND 'DOUBTING THOMASES'. They must watch out for those who propose violent acts of desperation as well as those who preach surrender and defeat.

The experience of the university workers teaches us that these are the correct principles and this is the right way to fight the struggle. The university workers have proved to all of us that exploitation and oppression can be resisted. Our people no longer have to go like lambs to the slaughter. If we apply these lessons of the university workers' strike carefully and skillfully, to our own struggles, victory will surely be ours in the end.